



Mimulus **MEMO**

**California Native Plant Society
Kern County Chapter**
Spring 2007

General Meeting and Program

Tuesday, March 20th

6pm Plant identification -bring hand lens, Jepson, Twisselman-Moe

7pm Program

Beale Library, downstairs meeting room

701 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield

Rare Plants of the Southern Sierra

Speaker: Fletcher Linton, Botanist on the Sequoia National Forest

We are pleased to present this program by Fletcher, our eyes and defender of plant life and therefore the animals that use our forest. Fletcher gave this informative and beautiful program at the Chapter Council Meeting in Ridgecrest last June, to rave reviews. Fletcher will take us from the Porterville area through the Sierra to the desert by maps and photographs. This program is guaranteed to inspire you to participate in our planned Wildflower Walks/Field Trips during the spring and summer!

Mimulus pictus Picnic

Sunday, April 22nd at 3:30pm

Woody-Granite Road

Bring your picnic dinner and beverage of choice to see our chapter logo in bloom at Lucy Clark and Clyde Golden's home. We will hike around the property, looking for other plants of interest and watching carefully for snakes. For dinner, we can sit on the granite outcrop, and have a brief meeting. Those who want to watch the sun set are welcome to stay. Every year this event is different, depending on the amount of spring rainfall, and the weather on the day (which is set 2 months in advance). Two years ago it poured on us! The Calico monkey flower is up in abundance this month, so please join us for the somewhat annual chapter picnic. No gasoline is available in the area.

Meet to car pool or caravan at the Denny's parking lot on 7th Standard and Hwy 65 at 2 :40pm. For east side members, please email Lucy at lucyg391@gmail.com for directions. It is easy to come over Hwy 155 to Woody.

Thank you!

Denis Kearns- for his beautiful program on Plants of the Olympic Peninsula

Steve Hampson- for his plant identification sessions before our meetings

Lucy Clark, Linda Cooley, Ellen Cypher, Steve Hampson, Eva Nipp, Maria Polite, Art and Lorraine Unger- for weeding at the Sand Ridge Preserve

Chapter Activities

Weeding at the Sand Ridge Preserve

Saturday, March 24th at 8:30am

Saturday, April 14th at 8:30am

After our wildflower walk at Sand Ridge, we will again take on the Sahara Mustard, Brassica tournefortii! It will no doubt be much larger than it was on January 21! Please bring water and a snack, your gloves and large plastic bags to help the natives growing on the much loved preserve. See the calendar of field trips for our meeting place on HWY 58. Meet us at 9am if you know how to get to the preserve.

NatureFest Table

April 28th, 29th 9am to 4pm (any 2 to 7 hour shift)

Audubon's Kern River Preserve

CNPS-Kern needs a few friendly individuals to work our table at the Audubon Kern River Preserve's new NatureFest to be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 28 and 29 from 9am to 4pm. The position requires that you hand out brochures, extra newsletters, explain what we do, and why it is important. Share your native plant gardening successes. This is a great outreach event where perhaps we can achieve our state-wide goal of enlisting 15% more members, and helping people understand the importance of native plants to our native critters.

We have a display board, a sign, and the brochures, and will get them to you. Before or after your stint at the table you can enjoy the array of events at the NatureFest. Contact Lucy at lucyg391@gmail.com to offer your help!

Wildflower Walks for 2007

General Information: Mark your calendars for learning about and enjoying our California native plants! We have another full calendar of wildflower walks, led by knowledgeable enthusiasts. We will take our field guides and work to identify the unknown plants we find. Join the fun in experiencing, learning, and enjoying the plant life we find with each outing. The walks are marked (E) for easy, (M) for moderate, (A) for active, (S) for strenuous, and (NR) for no restrooms, and approximate time for the walk. *Always bring water, lunch or snacks, your hand lens and field guides, hat, sunscreen, and layers of clothing for weather changes. Please leave pets at home.* CNPS insurance rules prevent us from assigning car pools, but we do encourage ride sharing from meeting locations. Parking space is usually limited, and we want to save the air.

March 17 (Saturday) – Botanist Walk in the Panorama Bluffs Park

Led by Lorraine Unger with John Wilbanks, Landscape Architect for the Kern County Parks.

Meet at 9 a.m. at River and Panorama Drive to learn what and why certain species were planted in this park.

For more information call Lorraine Unger at 323-5569 (E) (NR) (under 2 hours)

March 24 (Saturday) – Sand Ridge Preserve Weed Pulling and Tour

Led by Ellen Cypher

The first part of our day will be to enjoy the Coulter's jewelflower, fiddleneck, white layia, thistle sage, lupines, golden girls, desert dandelion, tansy-leaved phacelia, and sun cups. If we are lucky we might see wishbone bush, brittlebush, sand verbena, white evening primrose, and Indian tobacco in flower, but it will be a bit early. The last part of our day will be to help pull those pesky Sahara Mustards crowding out the natives. Bring gloves and a plastic bag or two.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Taco Bell on the SE corner of Hwys 58 and 184 (Weedpatch Hwy). If you know the Preserve, you may meet us at the entrance at 9:00 a.m. (M) (NR) (3 hours)

March 31 (Saturday) – California Living Museum

Led by Debby Kroeger

Experience the plants in your neighborhood living museum. There are over 48 plant families with approximately 82 genera to view. (E) (1-2 hours) Meet at CALM on Alfred Harrell Hwy. by 10 a.m. Cost will be \$3.25 at the group rate. Contact Don Turkal 393-4778 with any questions.

April 7 (Saturday) – Ridgecrest's Maturango Museum Wildflower Show

Led by Steve Hampson

We will spend time viewing collected flowers at the show and then head to a location with the best blooming plants (for more flower fun and to eat lunch)

Meet at the Taco Bell on the SE corner of Hwys 58 and 184 (Weedpatch Hwy) by 8 a.m. to drive to Ridgecrest. Otherwise meet us at 10 a.m. at the Maturango Museum, 100 E. Flores, just off China Lake Blvd. (Across the street is a looming Home Depot) Contact Steve shampson@gmail.com or at 661-366-6357 with any questions. (M) for canyon walking (All Day) To see more check out www.maturango.org

April 21 (Saturday) – Bittercreek National Wildlife Refuge

A joint trip with the Audubon Society led by Mike Stockton, Manager of this 14,000-acre refuge.

Formerly called the Hudson Ranch, this range houses most of the California Condors in the world. Offspring from the captive breeding program now scavenge the area. There should also be a great display of wildflowers, so along with bringing your lunch, include your binoculars and field guides.

Meet at the Stockdale Hwy Kern River Parkway parking lot across the street from CSUB by 7:15. The first potty stop will be at the McDonalds in Maricopa, with the trip being fairly easy, as we will ride through the refuge. The estimated return time is 3 p.m. For more information check out the Bittercreek National Wildlife Refuge web site at www.fws.gov/hoppermountain/Bitterck/index.html

OR ANOTHER CHOICE WOULD BE - - -

April 21 (Saturday) - Walker Pass

A joint trip with the Ridgecrest group of the Bristlecone Chapter. Led by Naomi Fraga.

Walker Pass is a mountain pass east of Lake Isabella in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains. We will park along Hwy 178 at a floriferous spot in the eastern portion of the pass, here we will see a variety of desert annuals including an abundance of Linanthus, and Eriophyllum species. Other noteworthy plants along the way may include desert pincushions (Chaenactis), sun cups (Camissonia), and the ever elusive pygmy poppy (Canbya candida). Bring lunch, ample water, sunscreen and a camera (hiking will be minimal). (E) (NR) (7 hours)

Meet at Tuesday Morning parking lot (Auburn and Fairfax) at 8 am to join the east-side group on the eastern portion of the pass at 10am. Contact Naomi Fraga for details at naomi.fraga@cgu.edu or (909) 625-8767x231

April 28 (Saturday) – Mill Creek Mosey

Led by Lucy Clark

A leisurely walk through foothill flowers down to Mill Creek to eat lunch (the one you brought), and to search for the red California Newt in its most southern habitat. Bring your wildflower field guide. (E) (NR) (6 hours minimum lot to lot)

Meet at 10 a.m. in the Tuesday Morning parking lot at Auburn and Fairfax or Kernville area residents can meet us at the trailhead on Old Kern Canyon Road at 10:30 a.m. Contact Lucy at lucyg391@gmail.com to reserve your place.

May 5 (Saturday) – Windmill-Wildflower Hike

Led by Paul Gipe and Nancy Nies, Kern Kaweah chapter of the Sierra Club (and Kern CNPS members)

We will walk the Pacific Crest Trail beginning promptly at 9 a.m. from the junction of Cameron and Tehachapi-Willow Springs Roads. The Sierra Club's local chapter sponsors the hike to spotlight a little-known section of the trail as well as the 3,500 wind turbines in the Tehachapi Pass. The route over Cameron Ridge offers sweeping vistas of the Mojave Desert, the Garlock Fault, and thousands of wind turbines. There will be little time for botanizing except at lunch. The hike is about 6 miles with a car ferry back to the beginning. We will be off the mountain by 1:30 or 2 p.m. and back to Bakersfield around 3 p.m. (Medium walk with slight elevation gain) (NR) (7-8 hours)

Call Paul at 661-325-9590 or Tony Swan 661-363-5106 if you need a ride. We will meet at the Taco Bell on the SE corner of Hwys 58 and 184 (Weedpatch Hwy) by 7:30 a.m.

May 6 (Sunday) – Cedar Creek

Led by Lucy Clark and Clyde Golden

Join us at one of our favorite wild flowering spots! This is off of Hwy 155, at about 4600 feet, and is an (E) to (M) walk, with a shallow creek crossing or two. We hope to see the Greenhorn Fritillary (*Fritillaria*), pink Globe Lilies (*Calochortus*), the shrub Oregon Grape or Barberry (*Berberis*), a *Ranunculus* genus (*Isopyrum*) with only two species, only one of which grows in Kern County, and other favorites like Baby Blue Eyes and Ithuriel's Spears. We once saw a mother Great Grey Owl, and her baby, which are not supposed to be this far south, so bring your binoculars as well as your flower books, AND your lunch. This trip can last as long as you like, with those needing to leave early retracing their steps.

Those coming from the Kernville area can join the valley group at the Cedar Creek Campground at 10am. The valley group will meet at 8:15am at the Denny's at the corner of 7th Standard Rd. and HWY 65 to carpool, as parking is limited at our destination. Please contact Lucy at lucyg391@gmail.com to reserve your place.

May 19 – Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Leaning Pine Arboretum

Led by Harriet Morris

We will visit the gardens on the campus of Cal Poly SLO. Time and weather permitting we will also visit the SLO Botanical Garden at El Chorro Regional Park. The garden features plants from the world's five Mediterranean climate zones. Meet by the recycle bins behind Joseph's restaurant at 30th and F street at 8 a.m.

For more information visit their web site at www.leaningpinearboretum.calpoly.edu

Bring lunch or buy on campus (Moderate with uphill climb) (1/2 day or longer)

June 22/23 (Friday/Saturday) – Horse Meadow (first of three flower experiences)

Led by Steve Hampson, Linda Cooley, and Lucy Clark

We are trying something new here! We want to share the wonderful succession of flowering plants along Sherman Pass Road. The elevation gain of about 6,000 feet to the Pass provides a long blooming period and a great diversity of plants. (Last year Steve and Linda counted 147 species that they thought they identified!) Beginning with fields of shooting stars (*Dedecatheon alpinum* and *jefferyi*) and ending with explorer's gentian (*Gentiana calycosa*), there is always something new in the meadows to knock your socks off. Small Salmon Creek runs through Horse Meadow Campground, elevation 7,300 feet. We will camp over night on Friday p.m., and look for and key the flowers once a month during the summer. This could be a family event (no pets, please), and there is enough to keep all ages busy way past noon. You will need to bring all of your own camping gear, as well as Friday night dinner, Saturday breakfast, and lunch. Diehards can plan to eat Saturday dinner at Kernville. Or the real diehards can stay until Sunday! There are vault toilets and water faucets in the campground. Cost is \$10 per site per night. We will try to camp in adjoining sites, and visit and eat together. Bring field guides, camera, binoculars, and bird books. Come for one, two, or all three trips.

In Kernville, at the "T" intersection of Sierra Way and Kernville Rd., turn left onto Sierra Way and go 19.8 miles to Sherman Pass Road. Turn right on Sherman Pass Road, and go 6.2 miles to a sign for Horse Meadow Campground or Forest Road 22S05/22S12 signs. Turn right onto Forest Road. 22S12 and go 9.3 miles to the campground sign. Turn right at this sign and go 1.3 miles to entrance. At the entrance, go left at the "Y" and go over a low water bridge. Look for us here. This is all passable in passenger cars.

You must let us know by the preceding Thursday p.m. if you plan to attend! Contact Steve Hampson at shamson@gmail.com or Lucy Clark at lucyg391@gmail.com

July 20/21 (Friday/Saturday) – Horse Meadow (second of three flower experiences)

See different flowering plants! Bring a bathing suit for the individual granite tubs. After our first trip we will evaluate how things went, and make appropriate changes, so **again, let us know by Thursday p.m. if you plan to join us!**

August 17/18 (Friday/Saturday) – Horse Meadow (third and final flower experience)

See the gentians in bloom! Bring your bathing suit! Please RSVP!

Blue Oak

by: Elisabeth Benders-Hyde

from: http://www.blueplanetbiomes.org/blue_oak.htm

Common Name: California Blue Oak, Iron Oak, Mountain White Oak, Mountain Oak

Genus: *Quercus*

Species: *douglasii*

The blue oak is endemic to (is only found in) the state of California on the western coast of North America. In its natural habitat it grows in the valleys and lower slopes of the Coast Ranges, the lower western foothills of the Sierra Nevada, and the north slope of the San Gabriel Mountains. Blue oak covers about 3 million acres and is one of the largest ancient forest type in California. The Scottish biologist David Douglas first named the blue oak in 1831 for the bluish color of its leaves.

The habitat of blue oaks is open savanna to open woodlands with shrubby understories. At lower elevation it merges with annual grasslands, and at higher elevations it blends with chaparral, pinyon and juniper woodlands. The blue oak often grows among gray pines and other oaks species such as live oak, black oak and valley oak.

Blue oaks are adapted to drought and dry climates. They can survive temperatures above 100° F for several weeks at a time. Average maximum temperatures in July can range from 70° to 100° F. In January minimum temperatures can range from 10° to 35° F. Annual precipitation averages 20 to 40 inches and mostly falls in the form of rain.

The blue oak is a short tree with an open canopy. The canopy is typically rounded with many crooked branches. The tree grows to average heights of 30 feet. In deep, moist soil it can grow up to 60 feet. It is a winter deciduous tree, but will sometimes shed its leaves during severely hot and dry years and go dormant. The litter of leaves and twigs decomposes into a soil high in nutrients and organic matter, holding water better than the surrounding areas. This contributes to high species diversity under the canopies.

Leaves of the blue oak are simple and grow alternately on the twig. The leaves are about 1-3 inches long and have wavy, shallow and irregular margins, usually with 7 lobes. They have a blue-green color above, and yellow-green on the lower surface. A waxy coating covers the tough and thick leaves to help conserve water.

Male flowers are yellow-green catkins. Female flowers are small and often solitary. These grow in the axis of the leaves on new twigs. Blue oaks flower from April through May.

The acorns are long, thin, and gently tapering. They are 3/4 to 1 1/2 inches long with shallow caps. The acorns ripen in one year, and can germinate after one month, unlike other oak varieties, which germinate the following spring. From the beginning most growth is in the roots instead of the shoots. This allows it to tap into available water sources right away, and survive dry conditions. The acorns are palatable to livestock and wildlife. It is an important food source for black-tailed deer, game birds and rodents. At least a dozen species of songbirds also eat the acorns.

The blue oak has an extensive root system. It can grow through cracks in rocks to depths of 80 feet to reach ground water. Its root system allows it to survive in fire prone and arid regions. Blue oaks reproduce both through seeds and vegetatively from burnt or cut stumps. The light colored bark is thick and helps reduce fire damage.

The blue oak isn't used in manufacturing because of its crooked growth habit. But it is used as fence posts and fuel wood. Native Americans made meal from blue oak acorns, and used the acorn leachate for dying baskets. The wood was used to make bowls.

Stands of blue oaks are typically 80 to 100 years old. Blue oaks are slow growers, and small plants can be 25 years old. Some blue oaks are as old as 200 to 500 years old. The number of blue oaks has decreased because there has been no natural regeneration. It is not considered endangered, however, because of its wide distribution across the region.

Bibliography:

Howard, Janet L. "Quercus douglasii", U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory (2002, September). Fire Effects Information System, [Online]. Available: <http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/> [Dec. 2002].

"Quercus douglasii fact sheet", <http://www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/syllabus/qdouglasii.htm>

"Biogeography of Blue Oak", <http://bss.sfsu.edu/geog/bholzman/courses/fall99/projects/blueoak.htm>

Also see "Oaks of California" by M. Pavlik, P. Muick, S. Johnson and M. Popper. Cachuma Press and the California Oak Foundation.

President's Message

We have a full schedule of activities this spring, and I hope you will join the chapter in participating! Thanks to Vonnie and Don Turkal, new members and now new Field Trip Chairpersons, we have an exciting array of Wild Flower Walks/Field Trips included in this issue of the Mimulus Memo, including joint trips with other groups. We are also re-instituting camping trips at several members' suggestions. Those people participating in the first overnight trip to Horse Meadow Campground will evaluate the scheduling, and decide if we will change to a Saturday/Sunday schedule from the planned Friday/Saturday. Please join us for beautiful displays of our native plants on all of our excursions! No scientific knowledge needed!

I don't know about you, but I am ready to get outside again. Last week we had wind, rain, sleet, hail and snow at our house. All on one morning. That afternoon we noticed our Red Tail Hawk was still on her nest. After all of that "bad" weather we saw our Popcorn, Blue Dicks, Red Maids and Fiddlenecks start to really open up and grow taller. Isn't nature amazing? -Lucy Clark

You should always receive a letter from CNPS when your membership is about to expire, but it was requested that for additional prior warning we include your membership expiration date on the Mimulus Memo mailing label as well. So, starting with this mailing, that information has been added as the last line on the label.

Our Kern County CNPS website is at <http://www.cnps.org/chapters/kern/>

If you know of some sites we should include links to, please let us know. Or, if you have some pictures or information on your own home page that you would like to share, that would be great! We would like to start a "local links" section on our web page where Kern CNPS members can share their thoughts, pictures, trips, gardening experiences, or whatever with other members.

This newsletter and some past newsletters can be found there in PDF format.

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The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to conserve them and their natural habitats through science, education, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship.